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A  
W E D D I N G - R I N G

Fit for the FINGER:

O R, T H E

S A L V E O F D I V I N I T Y

O N

The Sore of Humanity.

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Laid Open in a

S E R M O N

A T

W E D D I N G in *St. Edmonds.*

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G E N. II. Ver. 18.

*And the Lord God said, It is not good that the Man  
should be alone: I will make him a Help meet for  
him.*

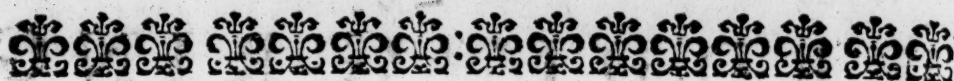
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By **WILLIAM SECKER**, Late Preacher  
of the G O S P E L.

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L O N D O N :

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## G E N. II. Ver. 18.

*And the Lord God said, It is not good that the Man should be alone : I will make him a help meet for him.*

**H**umane Misery is to Divine Mercy, as a black foil to a sparkling Diamond, or as a sable Cloud to the Sun-beams, *Psal. 84. Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him* ! Man is,

In his Creation, Angelical. In his Corruption, Diabolical. In his Renovation, Theological. In his Translation, Majestical.

An Angel in *Eden*.

A Devil in the World.

A Saint in the Church.

A King in Heaven.

There were four Silver Channels in which the Chrystal Streams of God's Affection ran to Man in his Creation.

1. In his Preparation.

2. In his Assimilation.

3. In his Coronation.

4. In his Association.

1. In his *Preparation* : Other Creatures received the Charter of their Beings by a simple *fiat* ; but there was a Consultation at his forming, not for the Difficulty, but for the Dignity of the Work. The Painter is more studious about his Master-piece. The Four Elements were taken out of their Element to make up the Perfection of Man's Complexion ; the Fire was purified, the Air was clarified, the Water was purged, the Earth was refined ; when Man was moulded, Heaven and Earth was married ; a Body from the one was espoused to Soul from the other.

2. In his *Assimilation* : Other Creatures were made like themselves, but Man was made like God, as the Wax had the Impression of the Seal upon it. It is admirable to behold so fair a Picture in such coarse Canvas, and so bright a Character in so brown Paper.

3. In his *Coronation* : He that made Man and all the rest made Man over all the rest ; *quantillum Dominum posuit De-*

*in tantum Dominum*, He was a little Lord of great Lordship; this King was Crowned in his *Cradle*.

4. In his *Association*: Society is the Solace of Humanity: the World would be a Desert without a Consort.

Most of Mens Parts are made in pairs; now he that was double in his Perfection, must not be single in his Condition, *And the Lord said*, &c.

These Words are like the Iron-gate that opened to *Peter* of its own accord, dividing themselves into three Parts.

1. An Instruction, *And the Lord God said*.

2. An Assertion, *'Tis not good that Man should be alone*.

3. A Determination, *I will make an help meet for him*.

In the First, there's a Majesty proposed.

In the Second, there's a Malady presented.

In the Third, there's a Remedy provided.

Once more let me put these Grapes into the Press.

1. The Sovereigness of the Expression, *And the Lord God said*.

2. The Solitariness of the Condition, *'Tis not good*, &c.

3. The Sutableness of the Provision, *I will make*, &c.

In the First, there's the worth of *Veracity*.

In the Second, there's the want of *Society*.

In the Third, there is the work of *Divinity*.

Of these in their Order. And first of the First.

*First*, The Sovereigness of the Expression. *And the Lord God said*.

*Luke* 1. 70. As he spake by the mouth of his Prophets. In other Scriptures he used their mouths, but in this he made use of his own: they were the Organs, and he the Breath; the early Streams, and he the Fountain. How he spake, 'tis hard to be spoken whether eternally, or in eternally, or externally, *Quomodo non est quod quæremus, sed potius quid dixerit intelligamus*: we are not to inquire to the manner of speaking, but to the matter that's spoken; which leads me like a directing-star from the Suburbs to the City, from the Porch to the Palace, from the Founder of the Mine, to the Treasure that is in it, *It is not good*, &c.

In which you have two Things:

A 2

1. The

## 1. The Subject. 2. The Predicate.

The Subject, *Man alone.*

The Predicate, *'Tis not good, &c.*

1. The Subject, *Man alone* ; take this in two Branches

1. As it is limited to one Man.

2. As it is lengthened to all Men.

*First*, As it is limited to one Man, and so it is taken particularly ; Man for the first Man. When all other Creature had their Mates, *Adam* wanted his: tho' he was the Emperor of the Earth, and the Admiral of the Seas, yet in *Paradise* without a Companion ; tho' he was truly happy, yet he was not fully happy ; Tho' he had enough for his Board, yet he had not enough for his Bed : Tho' he had many Creatures to serve him, yet he wanted a Creature to solace him ; when he was compounded in Creation, he must be compleated by Conjunction ; when he had no sin to hurt him, then he must have a Wife to help him ; *It is not good that Man should be alone.*

*Secondly*, As it's lengthened to all Men, and so it's taken universally, *Heb. 13. 4. Marriage is honourable unto all.* It's not only warrantable, but honourable. The whole *Trinity* hath conspired together to set a Crown of Glory upon the Head of *Matrimony*.

1. *God the Father* ; Marriage was a Tree planted within the Walls of *Paradise*, this Flower first grew in God's Garden.

2. *The Son* ; Marriage is a Crystal-glass, wherein *Christ* and the Saints do see each others Faces.

3. *The Holy Ghost* ; By his over-shadowing of the Blessed *Virgin*. Well might the World when it saw her pregnancy, suspect her Virginitie ; but her Matrimonial Condition was a grave to that Suspicion : without this, her Innocency had not prevented her Infamy ; she needed a Shield to defend that Chastity abroad, which was kept inviolable at Home.

Too many that have not worth enough to preserve that Virginitie, have yet will enough to cover their Unchastity ; turning the Medicine of Frailty into the Mantle of Filthiness. Certainly she is mad that cuts off her Leg to get her a Crutch, or that venomes her Face to wear a Mask.

*St. Paul* makes it one of the Characters of those that should cashier

cashier the Faith, 1 Tim. 4. 3. Not to forbear Marriage, which may be lawful ; but to forbid it, which is sinful.

One of the *Popes* of *Rome* sprinkles this unholy Drop upon it, *Carnis pollutionem & immunditiam*.

It is strange that should be a Pollution, which was instituted before Corruption ; or that Impurity, which was ordained in the State of Innocency : or that they should make that to be a Sin, which they make to be a Sacrament.

But a Bastard may be laid at the door of Chastity, and a leaden Crown set upon a Golden Head.

*Bellarmino*, that mighty *Atlas* of the *Papal* Power, blows his stinking Breath upon it, saying, *Better were it for a Priest to defile himself with many Harlots, than to be married to one Wife*. These Children of the Purple-hore prefer their Monasteries before our Marriages, a Concubine before a Companion. They use too many for their Lusts, to chuse any for their Love. Their Tables are so largely spread, that they can't feed upon one Dish.

As for their exalting of a Virgin-state, it's like him that commended Fasting when he had filled his Belly,

Who knows not that Virginity is a Pearl of sparkling Lustre ? But cannot the one be set up, without the other be thrown down ? Will no Oblation pacify the former, but the Demolishing of the latter. Tho' we find many Enemies to the Choice of Marriage, yet it's rare to find any Enemies to the Use of Marriage. They would pick the Lock that want the Key, and pluck the Fruit that do not plant the Tree.

The *Hebrews* having a Saying, *He is not a Man that bath not a Woman*.

Tho' they climb too high a Bough, yet it's to be feared that such Flesh is full of Imperfection, that is not tending to Propagation : Tho' Man alone may be good, yet *It is not good that Man should be alone* : which leads me from the Subject to the Predicate, *It is not good, &c.*

*Non bonum*, is not in this place as *malum*, but *bonum est honestum, utile jucundum*.

Now it is not good that Man should be in a single Condition, upon a Threefold Consideration.

1. In respect of Sin, which would not else be prevented, Marriage is like Water, to quench the sparks of Lust's fire, 1 Cor. 7. 2. *Nevertheless to avoid Fornication, let every one have his own Wife, &c.* Man needed no such Physick when he was in perfect Healt. Temptations may break Nature's best Fence, and lay its Paradise waste ; but a single Life is a Prison of unruly Desires, which is daily attempted to be broken open.

Some indeed force themselves to a single Life, meerly to avoid the Charges of a Married state ; they had rather fry in the grease of their own Sensuality, than extinguish those flames with an allowed Remedy : *It's better to marry than to burn*, to be lawfully coupled, than to be lustfully scorched. It's best Feeding these flames with ordinary Fewel.

2. 'Tis not good in respect of Mankind, which then would not be propagated. The *Roman* Historian relating the Ravishing of the *Sabine* Woman, excused it thus, *Res erat unius ætatis populus virorum* : Without them Mankind would fall from the Earth and perish. Marriages do turn Mutability into the image of Eternity : it springs up new Buds, when the old are withered. It's a greater honour for a Man to be the Father of one Son, than to be the Master of many Servants. Without a Wife, Children cannot be had lawfully ; without a good Wife, Children cannot be had comfortably. Man and Woman, as the Stock and the Scion, being grafted by Marriage, are Trees bearing Fruit to the World.

St. *Augustine* says, This Pair is, *Primum Par & Fundamentum omnium*, &c.

They are the first Link of Humane Society, to which all the rest all joyned. Mankind had long ago decayed and been like a Taper fallen into the Socket, if those breaches which are made by Mortality, were not repair'd by Matrimony.

3. 'Tis not good in regard of the Church, which could not then have been expiated. Where there is no Generation, there can be no Regeneration.

Nature makes us Creatures, before Grace makes us Christians.

If the Loins of Men had been less fruitful, the Death of *Christ* would have been less successful.

It was a witty Question that one put to him that said, Marriage Fills the Earth, but Virginity fills the Heavens : How can the Heavens be full, if the Earth be empty ?

Had *Adam* lived in Innocency without Matrimony, there would have been no Servants of God in the Church Militant, nor no Saints with God in the Church Triumphant. But I will not sink this Vessel by the over-burthening of it, nor press this Truth to death, by laying too great a load upon its shoulders.

There is one Knot which I must untie before I make a further progress, 1 Cor. 1. *It is good for a Man not to touch a Woman.*

Do all the Scriptures proceed out of the same Mouth, and do they not all speak the same Truth ? The God of Unity will not indite Discord ; and the God of Verity cannot assert Falshood. If Good and Evil be contraries, how contrary then are these Scriptures ? Either *Moses* mistakes God, or *Paul* mistakes *Moses* about the point of Marriage. To which I shall give a double Answer.

1. There is a Publick and a Private Good. In respect of one Man, it may be good not to touch a Woman, but in respect of all, *So it is not good that Man should be alone.*

*Moses* speaks of the state of Man created, *Paul* of the state of Man corrupted : Now that which by Institution was a Mercy, may by corruption become a misery ; as pure Water is tainted by running thro' a miry Channel, or as the Sun's Beams receive a tincture by shining thro' a coloured glass. There's no print of Evil in the World, but Sin was the Stamp that made it. They that seek nothing but Weal in its Commission, will find nothing but Wo in the Conclusion. Which leads me from the Solitariness of the Condition, *Man alone*, to the Sutableness of the Provision, *I will make an help meet for him.*

In which you have two Parts ; 1. The Agent, *I will make.*

2. The Object, *A help.*

First, the Agent, *I will make.*

We cannot build a House without Tools but the Trinity is at liberty ; *Dic verbum tantum.*

To God's Omniscience there's nothing invisible, and to God's Omnipotence there's nothing impossible.

We work by Hands without, but He works without Hands. He that made Man meet for Help, makes a meet Help for Man.

Marriages are consented above, but consummated below, *Prov. 17. 22.* Tho' Man wants supply, yet Man cannot supply his Wants, *James 1. 17.* Every good and perfect gift comes from above, &c. A Wife, tho' she be not a perfect Gift, yet she is a good Gift. These Beams are darted from the Son of Righteousness.

Hast thou a soft Heart? It's of God's Breaking: Hast thou a sweet Wife? She's of God's Making.

Let me draw up this Expression with a double Application.

When thou layest out for such a Good on Earth, look up to the God of Heaven. Let Him make thy Choice for thee, who hath made his Choice of thee. Look above you, before you, look about you. Nothing makes up the Happiness of a Married Condition, like the Holiness of a mortified Disposition. Account not those of the most Worthy that are the most Wealthy. Art thou matched to the Lord? Match in the Lord. How happy are such Marriages, were Christ is at the Wedding! Let none but those who have found Favour in God's Eyes, find Favour in yours.

2. Give God the Tribute of your Gratulation for your good Companions. Take heed of paying your Rent to a wrong Land-lord. When you taste of the Stream, reflect on the Spring that feeds it. Now thou hast four Eyes for thy Speculation, four Hands for thy Operation, four Feet for thy Ambulation, and four Shoulders for thy Sustenance. What the Sin against the *Holy Ghost* is in point of Divinity, that is Unthankfulness in point of Morality; an Offence unpardonable. Pity it is but that Moon should be ever in an Eclipse, that will not acknowledge her Beams to be borrowed from the Sun. He that praises not the Giver, prizes not the Gift; and so I pass from the Agent to the Object, *A Help*.

She must be so much, and no less; and so much and no more. Our Ribs were not ordained to be our Rulers. They are not made of the Head, to claim Superiority, but out of the

the Side, to be content with Equality. They desert the Author of Nature, that invert the Order of Nature. The Woman was made for the Man's Comfort, but the Man was not made for the Woman's Command. Those Shoulders aspire too high, that content not themselves with a room below their Head, It's between a Man and his Wife in the House, as it is between the Sun and the Moon in the Heavens, when the greater Light goes down, the lesser Light gets up; when the one ends in setting, the other begins in shining. The Wife may be a Sovereign in her Husband's Absence, but she must be Subject in her Husband's Presence. As *Pharaoh* said to *Joseph*, so should the Husband say to his Wife, *Gen. 41. 40. Thou shalt be over my House, and according to thy word shall all my People be ruled; only in the Throne will I be greater than thou.* The Body of that Household can never make any good Motion, whose Bones are out of place. The Woman must be a Help to the Man in these four Things:

1. To his *Piety*.                      2. To his *Society*.
3. To his *Progeny*.                4. To his *Prosperity*.

To his *Piety*, by the ferventness of her Excitation. To his *Society*, by the fragrantness of her Conversation. To his *Progeny*, by the fruitfulness of her Education. To his *Prosperity*, by the faithfulness of her Preservation.

1. To his *Piety*, by the ferventness of her Excitation, 1 *Pet. 2. 7.*

Husband and Wife should be as the two Milch-kine, which were coupled together to carry the Ark of God; or as the two Cherubims, that looked one upon another, and both upon the Mercy-seat: Or as the two Tables of Stone, on each of which were engraven the Laws of God. I some Families married Persons are like *Jeremia's* two Baskets of Figs, the one very good, the other very evil; or like Fire and Water, whilst the one is flaming in Devotion, the other is freezing in Corruption. There is a two-fold hinderance in Holiness: First, of the Right-side; Secondly, on the Left. On the Right-side: when the Wife would run in God's way, the Husband will not let go: When the Fore-horse in a Team will not draw, he wrongs all the rest; when the General of an Army forbids a March,

March, all the Souldiers stand still. Sometimes on the Left; how did *Solomon's* idolatrous Wives draw away his Heart from Heaven? A sinning Wife was *Satan's* first Ladder, by which he scaled the Walls of Paradise, and tooft away the Fort Royal of *Adam's* Heart from him. Thus she that should have been the help of his Flesh, was the hurt of his Faith: His Nature's Under-proper, becomes his Grace's Under-miner; and she that should be a Crown on the Head, is a Cross on the Shoulders. The Wife is often to the Husband, as the Ivy is to the Oak, which draws away his Sap from him.

2. A Help to his *Society*, by the fragrantness of her Conversation.

Man is an Affectionate Creature; now the Woman's Behaviour should be such towards the Man, as to require his Affection, by increasing his Delectation. That the New-born Love may not be blasted as soon as it's blossomed; that it may not be ruined, before it be rooted. A Spouse should carry her self so to her Husband, as not to disturb his Love by her Contention, nor to destroy his Love by her Alienation. Husband and Wife should be like two Candles burning together, which makes the House more lightsome; or like two fragrant Flowers bound up in one Nosegay, that augments its Sweetness; or like two well-tuned Instruments, which sounding together, make the more melodious Musick. Husband and Wife, what are they but as two Springs meeting, and so joyning their Streams that they may make but one Current? It's an unpleasing Spectacle, to view any Contention in this Conjunction.

3. To his *Progeny*, by the fruitfulness of her Education; that so her Children in the Flesh, may be God's Children in the Spirit; 1 *Sam.* 1. 11. *Hannah* she vows if the Lord will give her a Son, by bearing him, she will return that Son to the Lord by serving him. A Spouse should be more careful of her Childrens Breeding, than she should be fearful of her Childrens Bearing. Take heed lest these Flowers grow in the *Devil's* Garden. Tho' you bring them out in Corruption, yet do not bring them up to Damnation. Those are not Mothers, but Monsters; that whilst they should be teaching their

their Children the way to Heaven with their Lips, are leading them the way to Hell with their Lives. Good Education is the best Livery you can give them living ; and it's the best Legacy you can leave them dying. You let out your cares to make them great, O lift up your Prayers to make them good : that before you die from them, you may see *Christ* live in them. Whilst these Twigs are green and tender, they should be bow'd towards God. Children and Servants are in a Family, as Passengers are in a Boat ; Husband and Wife they are as a pair of Oars, throw them to their desired Haven. Let these small pieces of Timber be hewed and squared for the Celestial Building : By putting a Scepter of Grace into their Hands, you will set a Crown of Glory upon their Heads.

4. A help to his Prosperity by her faithful Preservation, being not a Wanderer abroad, but a Worker at home.

One of the Ancients speaks excellently ; She must not be a Field-wife, like *Dinah* ; nor a Street-wife, like *Thamar* ; nor a Window-wife, like *Jezabel*.

*Phidias* when he drew a Woman, plained her sitting under a Snail-shell, that she might imitate that little Creature, that goes no farther than it can carry its House upon its Head.

How many Women are there, that are not labouring Bees, but idle Drones ; that take up a room in the Hive, but bring no Honey to it ; that are Moths to their Husbands Estates, spending when they should be spairing ? As the Man's part is to provide industriously, so the Woman's is to preserve discreetly ; the one must not be carelessly wanting, the other must not be causelessly wasting : the Man must be seeking with diligence, the Woman must be saving with Providence. The Cock and Hen both scrape together in the Dust-heap, to pick up something for their little Chickens.

To wind up this on a short Bottom.

1. If the Woman be a help to the Man, then let not the Man cast dirt on the Woman.

*Secundus* being asked his Opinion of a Woman, speaks thus, *Viri naufragium, Domus tempestas, Quietis impedimentum*, &c. But surely he was a Monster, and not a Man ; fitter for a Tomb to bury him, than a Womb to bear him.

Some

Some have stiled them to be, like Clouds in the Sky. Like Moles in the Sun. Like Snuffs in the Candle. Like Weeds in the Garden.

It is not good to play the Butcher with that naked Sex, that hath no Arms but for Embraces. A Preacher should not be silent for those, who are silenced from Preaching; because they are the weaker Vessels, shall they be broken all to pieces? Thou that sayest Women are evil, it may be thy Expression flows from thy Experience; but I shall never take that Mariner for my Pilot, that hath no better knowledge than the splitting of his own Ship. Wilt thou condemn the fram of all, for the fault of one? As if it were true *Logick*. Because some are evil, therefore none are good. He hath ill Eyes that disdains all Objects. To blast thy Helper, is to blame thy Maker. In a word, we took our rise from their Bowels, and may take our rest in their Bosoms.

2. Is the Woman to be a help to the Man? Then let the Man be a Help to the Woman. What makes these Debtors be such ill Pay-masters? but because they look at what is owing them, but not at what is owing by them? If thou wouldst have thy Wife's Reverence, let her have thy Respect. To force a Fear from this Relation, is that which neither befits the Husband's Authority to enjoin, nor the Wife's Duty to perform. A Wife must not be sharply driven, but sweetly drawn. Compassion may bend her, but Compulsion will break her, Husband and Wife should Act towards each other with consent, not be constraint.

There are four things wherein the Husband is a meet help to the Wife.

*First*, In his protecting of her from Injuries. It's well observed by one, That the Rib of which Woman was made, was taken from under the Man's Arm: As the use of the Arm is to keep off Blows from the Body, so the Office of the Husband is to ward off Blows from the Wife. The Wife is the Husband's Treasury, and the Husband should be the Wife's Armory. In Darkness, he should be her Sun for Direction; in Danger, he should be her Shield for Protection.

*Secondly*, In his providing for her Necessities. The Husband

must

must communicate Maintenance to the Wife, as the Head conveys Influence to the Members ; thou must not be a Drone, and she a Drudge. A Man in a married Estate, is like a Chamberlain in an Inn, ther's knocking for him in every Room. Many Persons in this Condition, waste that Estate in Luxury, which should supply their Wives Necessity. *Nec amor viget mariti, nec fides Christiani* ; They have neither the Faith of a *Christian*, nor the Love of a Husband. It's a sad Spectacle to see a Virgin sold with her own Money unto slavery, when Services are better than Marriages ; the one receives Wages, whilst the other buys their Fetters.

3. In his Covering her Infirmities. Who would trample upon a Jewel, because it is fallen in the dirt ? Or throw away a heap of Wheat for a little Chaff ? Or despise a Golden wedge, because it retains some Dross ? These Roses have some Prickles. Now Husbands should spread a Mantle of Charity over their Wives Infirmities. They be ill Birds that defile their own Nests. It's a great deal better you should fast, than feast your selves upon their Failings. Some Husbands are never well, longer than they are holding their Fingers in their Wives Sores. Such are like Crows, that fasten only upon Carrion. Do not put out the Candle, because of the Snuff. If the Gold be good, allow it Grains. Husbands and Wives should provoke one another to Love ; and they should love one another notwithstanding of Provocation. Take heed of poysoning those Springs from whence the Streams of your Pleasures flows.

4. By his delighting in her Society. A Wife takes Sanctuary, not only in her Husband's House, but in his Heart. The Tree of Love should grow up in the Family, as the Tree of Life grew up in the Garden. They that chuse their Love, should love their Choice. They that marry where they affect not, will affect where they marry not. Two joyned together without Love, are but two tyed together to make one another miserable. And so I pass to the last Stage of the Text, *A Help meet*.

*A Help*, there's her Fulness ; a *meet Help*, ther's her Fitness.

The Angels were too much above him ; the Creatures were too much below him ; he could not step up to the former, nor could he stoop down to the latter : The one was out of his Reach, the other was out of his Race ; but the Woman is a Paralel-line drawn equal with him : meet she must be in three things.

1. In the Harmony of Her Disposition. Husband and Wife should be like the Image in a Looking-glass, that answers in all Properties to the Face that stands before it ; or like an *Eccho*, that returneth the Voice it receiveth. Many Marriages are putting New Wine into Old Bottles. An Old Man is not a meet Help for a Young Woman. He that sets a Gray Head upon Green Shoulders, hath one Foot in the Grave, and another in the Cradle. Yet how many times do you see the Spring of Youth, wedded to the Winter of Old Age ? A Young Person is not a meet Help for an Old Woman ; Raw Flesh is but an ill Plaister for Rotten Bones. He that in his Non-age marries another in her Dotage, his Lust hath one Wife in Possession, but his Love another in Reversion.

2. In the Heraldry of her Condition. Some of our *European* Nations are so strict in their Junctions, that it's against their Laws, for the Commonalty to couple with the Gentry.

It was well said by one : If the Wife be too much above her Husband, she either ruins him by her vast Expences, or reviles him with her base Reproaches. If she be too much below her Husband, either her former Condition makes her too Generous, or her present Mutation makes her too Imperious.

Marriages are stiled *Matches* ; yet amongst those many that are married, how few are there that are matched ? Husbands and Wives are like Locks and Keys, that rather break than open, except the Wards be answerable.

3. In the Holiness of her Religion. If Adultery may separate a Marriage contracted, Idolatry may hinder a Marriage not perfected. Cattle or divers Kinds were not to ingender, 2 *Corinth.* 6. 14. *Be not unequally yoked*, &c. It's dangerous taking her for a Wife, who will not take GOD for a Husband. It is not meet that one flesh should be of two Spirits. Is there never a Tree thou likest in the Garden but that which bears forbidden Fruit ? There are but two Channels, in which the remaining Streams shall run.

1. To those Men that want Wives, how to chuse them.
2. To those Women that have Husbands, how to use them.

*First*, To those Men that want Wives, how to chuse them.

Marriage is the tying of such a Knot, that nothing but Death can unloose. Common Reason suggests so much, that we should be long a-doing, that which can but once be done. Where one design hath been gravelled in the Sands of Delay, thousands have been split upon the Rock of Precipitance. Rash Advantures yields little gain. Opportunities are not like Tides, that when one is past, another returns ; but yet take heed of flying without your Wings : You may breed such Agues in your Bones, that may shake you to your Grave.

1. Let me preserve you from a Bad Choice.

2. Present you with a Good One.

1. To preserve you from a Bad Choice. Take that in three Things:

1. Chuse not for Beauty. 2. Chuse not for Dowry. 3. Chuse not for Dignity.

He that looks for Beauty, buys a Picture.

He that loves for Dowry, makes a Purchase.

He that leaps for Dignity, matches with a Multitude at once.

The First of these is too bind to be directed.

The Second, too base to be accepted.

The Third, too bold to be respected.

1. Chuse not by your Eyes. 2. Chuse not by your Hands. 3. Chuse not by your Ears.

*First*, Chuse not by your Eyes, looking at the Beauty of the Person. Not but this is lovely in a Woman ; but that this is not all for which a Woman

Woman should be beloved. He that had the Choice of many Faces, stamps the Character upon them all: *Favour is deceitful, and Beauty is vain.* The Sun is more bright in a clear Sky, then when the *Horizon* is clouded. But if a Woman's Flesh hath more of Beauty, than her Spirit hath of *Christianity*; it's like Poyson in Sweet meats, most dangerous, *Gen. 6. 2. The Sons of God saw the Daughters of Men, that they were fair, &c.* One would have thought, that they should rather have looked for Grace in the Heart, than for Beauty in the Face. Take heed of Inning at the fairest Signs: The Swan hath black Flesh under her white Feathers.

*Secondly,* Chuse not by your Hands for the Bounty of the Portion.

When *Cato's* Daughter was asked, Why she did not marry? she thus replied, She could not find the Man that loved her Person above her Portion. Men love curious Pictures, but they would have them set in golden Frames. Some are so degenerate, as to think any good enough, who have but Goods enough. Take heed, for sometimes the Bag and Baggage go together. The Person should be a Figure, and the Portion a Cypher, which added to her, advances the Sum; but alone signifies nothing. When *Themistocles* was to marry his Daughter, two Suiters courted her together; the one Rich, and a Fool; the other Wise, but Poor; and being demanded, which of the Two he had rather his Daughter should have? He answered, *Mallem Vinum sine Pecunia, &c.* I had rather she should have a Man without Money, than Money without a Man.

*Thirdly,* Chuse not by your Ears, for the Dignity or her Parentage. A good Old Stock may nourish a Fruitless Branch. There are many Children who are not the Blessings, but the Blemishes of their Parents. They are Nobly descended, but Ignobly minded. Such was *Aurelius Antoninus* of whom it was said, That he injured his Country in nothing, but being the Father of such a Child. There are many low in their Descents, that are high in their Deserts. Such as the Cocker's Son, who grew to be a famous Captain; when a Great Person upbraided the meanness of his Original, My Nobility (saith he) begins with me, but thy Nobility ends with thee. Piety is a greater Honour than Parentage. She is the best Gentlewoman that is Heir of her own Deserts, and not the degenerated Offspring of another's Vertue.

To present you with a good Choice, in three Things;

1. Chuse such a one as will be subject to our Dominion. Take heed of yoking your selves with Untamed Heifers.

2. Chuse such a One as may sympathize with you in your Affliction. Marriage is just like a Sea-Voyage; he that enters into this Ship, must look to meet with Storms and Tempests: *1 Corinth. 7. 28. They that marry, shall have trouble in the Flesh.* Flesh and Trouble married together, whether we marry or no; now a Bitter Cup is too much to be drunk by one Mouth. A heavy Burthen is easily carried by the Assistance of other Shoulders. Husband and Wife should neither be Proud-flesh, nor Dead flesh. You are Fellow-members, therefore should have a Fellow-feeling.

feeling. While one stands safe on the Shore, the other should pity him that is tost on the Sea. Sympathy in Suffering is like a Dry House in a Wet-day.

3. Chuse such a one as may be serviceable to your Salvation. A Man may think he hath a Saint, when he hath a Devil : but take heed of a Harlot, that is false to thy Bed ; and of a Hypocrite, that is false to thy G O D.

*Secondly*, To those Women that have Husbands, how to use them. In two Things.

1. Carry your selves towards them with Obedience. Let their Power command you, that their Praise may commend you. Tho' you may have your Husbands Hearts, yet you must not have their Heads ; as you will his Love, so you should love his Will. Till the Husband leaves Commanding, the Wife must never leave Obeying. As his Injunctions must be Lawful, so her Subjection must be Loyal.

2. With Faithfulness. In Creation, God made not one Woman for many Men, nor many Women for one Man : Every Wife should be to her Husband, as *Evab* was to *Adam*, a whole world of Women ; and every Husband should be to his Wife, as *Adam* was to *Evab*, a whole world to Men. When a River is divided into many Channels, the main Current starves.

To conclude : Good Servants are a great Blessing : good Children a greater Blessing ; but a good Wife is the greatest Blessing : And such a Help let him seek for her that wants one, let him sigh for her that hath lost one ; let him take pleasure in her, that enjoys one. *And the Lord God said, It is not good that the Man should be alone : I will make him a help meet for him.* 18 JA 53

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